

## **Abstract**

Methods and apparatus for providing and using a portable electronic data storage and information retrieval system for healthcare and/or other types of applications are described. Each portable storage device (PSD) (e.g., smart card) for a group, e.g., household, allows the storage and retrieval of household level information in addition to individual household member data/information. Data/information is stored corresponding to different applications. The PSD is accessed by a service provider's computer system. Access to the data/information is secured via authentication and/or various encryption techniques. Various service providers or types of service providers have access to different portions of the information stored on the portable storage device based upon pre-arranged agreements and/or service needs. Access is controlled through security information and/or security modules which are used to limit access. Service providers can update network based information databases and/or update the information on the PSD, e.g., to indicate a particular service or treatment.